

A guide to fun, learning,
and literacy for young
children and their families.



FAMILY RESOURCE BOOK

The *Jumpstart® Family Resource Book* taps into the power of play. Young children love to explore things, try out new ideas, and use all their senses to make discoveries. This book offers fun and easy activities you can do at home to help integrate learning into your child's everyday routine. **Each activity is designed to help young children build the language, literacy, and social skills they'll need to succeed in school.**



Established in 1993 by two Yale University students, Jumpstart is working toward the day every child in America enters school prepared to succeed. Jumpstart pairs preschool children one-to-one with a well trained, caring adult who can help them build the skills they need for future school success.

Together, with you and your child's school, we focus on three areas:

School Success

We help young children get ready for school by working with them on the *School Success Outcomes*. These skills are listed in this book, along with ideas on how to promote your child's learning.

Family Involvement

Families are the first and most important teachers of their children. Together, with your child's Corps member, you can help prepare your child for school.

Future Teachers

Jumpstart trains college students, called Corps members, to work one-to-one with young children and their families, focusing on the skills your child needs for success.

Family Resource Book

A guide to fun, learning, and literacy for young children and their families

Use the space above to personalize your Family Resource Book with your child.

“Jumpstart Corps members have impacted my family by making reading a lot more fun, while at the same time stressing family involvement. I enjoy seeing the look on Adam's face when it's Jumpstart day. This excitement motivates me to plan weekend activities and home projects for us to explore together.”

- Montré Evans, mother of preschooler at U.P.O. #4-N Street Villiage

Learning Through Play



Children love to explore things, try out new ideas, and use all their senses to make discoveries. To help your children learn about something, just provide the materials, space, and time. Then step back and watch them explore and learn.

It's more important for children to think creatively and problem solve with stimulating materials than to come up with a perfect craft as a result. The process of play is more important than the product.

Learning to Read and Write

From the moment babies are born, their journey to becoming readers and writers begins. Years of playing, talking, listening, and reading together become the foundation for the skills that they will develop over the next several years.

Reading experts have found that children need to develop strong speaking and listening skills early in order to learn to read and write. Adults should encourage children to ask questions, sing songs, and pretend to play when reading and talking together. Children will learn more words from these exercises and will understand how to use the words correctly, including how to write them.

Children will learn to write by observing people who know how to write. Let your children see you write, especially when you write things that interest them, like their names or words and stories that they say.

In addition to these basic learning skills, experts have identified specific learning skills that children should have in order to take on the challenge of learning how to read.

These skills are called:

- **Print Knowledge:** Children's awareness of the written word in everyday life through books, words, and letters.
- **Emergent Writing:** Children's beginning efforts to write. This could include drawing and scribbling.
- **Linguistic Awareness:** Children's understanding of how words work.

Easy Tips for Reading With Your Child

(These easy tips are taken from "Parenting Tips" by Pearson Scott Foresman and Jumpstart.)

Read books to your child at least once every day.

- ✓ Try reading at bedtime, after a meal, or in the tub.
- ✓ If you have a bus ride or time to wait somewhere, keep a book with you.

Make it fun!

- ✓ Use different voices for different characters.

Read books your child likes.

- ✓ Allow your child to choose books to read.
- ✓ Ask your child's classroom teacher or Jumpstart Corps member what books he/she enjoys.
- ✓ Your child will love being read to when they already know the story.
- ✓ Read the book several times - he/she will likely ask!

Talk about the book together.

- ✓ Ask questions about the story.
- ✓ Talk about the book during the day while walking to school or before dinner.

Read everything you see.

- ✓ Read street signs, food containers, billboards, and mail.
- ✓ Encourage your child to read these things and give them lots of encouragement: "Look at that! You read the word STOP!"

Read when you are writing.

- ✓ Read the lists and notes you write out loud.
- ✓ Let your child "write" and "read" it back to you.

Create your own stories.

- ✓ Making up stories together helps children learn new words, use their imagination, and learn important things about who they are and their community.
- ✓ You can tell stories together anytime, such as when walking to school or riding home.

Start now!

- ✓ Everything we know about how young children learn to read and write tells us that the younger they start the better!
- ✓ Good luck and enjoy - you will get as much out of it as your child!



Reading with Your Child: Why it is important?

Children who are read to are more likely to enjoy reading themselves when they grow up. Reading together with your child everyday is a wonderful way to:

- enjoy one another and spend time together
- help your child learn new words and ideas
- give your child time to speak and listen
- get your child interested in reading and books



The way you read to your child is just as important as how often you read. To help you make the most of your time reading to your child, Jumpstart recommends using an interactive reading technique called **dialogic reading**.

Developed as part of the Stony Brook Reading and Language Project, this technique helps children learn more words and become better able to identify letters and sounds. By taking turns in asking and responding to questions about a book, or by reading and talking about the book, **dialogic reading** encourages children to become storytellers.

Dialogic reading includes:

- reading a book together
- talking about the story together
- helping your child become the storyteller or “reader” of a book
- creating active and fun approaches to reading
- asking your child questions about the story in different ways
- reading the same book together at least three times

Here are some tips based on the **dialogic reading technique**:

- Invite your child to choose a place to sit and read together.
- Introduce the book for the first time by talking about the title, author, and illustrator.
- Read the entire story and point to each word as you read it.
- Read the same story three times with your child.
- Ask one or two questions per page.
- Ask questions like: “What is that elephant doing?” “Why is the girl sad?”
- Point out things in the pictures and ask your child to talk about them.
- Don't say the last word in a sentence. For example, say “Hickory Dickory Dock, the mouse ran up the _____.”
- Ask questions about what happened in the story after you have read it.
- Ask questions from the story that might relate to your child's life. For example, after reading a book about zoo animals, you might say, “Do you remember when we went to the zoo and saw the baby giraffe?”

Jumpstart School Success Outcomes

Every activity in this book supports Jumpstart's *School Success Outcomes* and will help children develop the following skills:

Language skills are what children need to speak to others, to ask questions, to listen to others, and to share their thoughts. Jumpstart focuses on these language skill areas with your child:

Understanding Speech. Understanding words that are spoken in his/her native language and completing multi-step directions

Understanding Sounds in Words. Knowing that words are made up of sounds and using this skill while learning to read

Speaking. Speaking in long sentences and making creative stories, rhymes, and songs

Recognizing and Making Rhymes. Rhyming words of more than one syllable and knowing when words are rhyming

Initiative skills are what children need to work well on their own. Jumpstart focuses on these initiative skill areas with your child:

Making and Expressing Choices. Choosing an activity, materials, or playmates and describing his/her choice in detail

Participating in Routines. Following the program routine or schedule even without an adult nearby

Problem Solving. Trying different ways to solve a problem without giving up easily

Planning Complex Activities. Joining with other children and sharing resources to carry out a complicated sequence of activities

Literacy skills are what children need to eventually be able to read and write. Jumpstart focuses on these literacy skill areas with your child:

Interest in Reading Activities. Asking to be read to and pretending to read a book or tell a story while turning the pages

Beginning Reading. Reading or recognizing familiar words, such as

his/her own name, or familiar phrases, like "happy birthday," or sentences, like "I love you"

Knowing How Books Work. Knowing how to hold a book with the pictures right side up and to turn pages one at a time from right to left

Beginning Writing. Copying or writing identifiable letters, perhaps his/her own name, some words, and short sentences

Social Relations skills are what children need to work well with others. Jumpstart focuses on these social relations skill areas with your child:

Relating to Children and Adults. Working on projects with other children, playing together and

following the rules, and working on projects with familiar adults, such as clean up

Making Friends. Calling other children by their names, asking friends for help, and offering help to friends

Social Problem Solving. Working with other children to solve problems without needing adults to help

Understanding and Expressing Feelings. Expressing feelings and responding appropriately to the feelings of others

Jumpstart helps children develop the following skills crucial to their success in school:

Language:

To speak and communicate verbally.

Literacy:

To be able to read and write.

Initiative:

To learn to work well on their own.

Social Relations:

To learn to work well with others.

Things To Do With Your Children Every Day

Adults have many family responsibilities on a day-to-day basis, but you can make these responsibilities fun learning experiences for your children! You can find ways to include children in chores by planning around their strengths and interests. For example, if they are excited about a new shirt, let them help out with the laundry to keep their shirt clean. Try to keep a consistent routine when doing chores, as consistency helps children understand and predict what will come next.

Breakfast/Mealtime

- ✓ Read cereal boxes and milk cartons
- ✓ Ask children to pour their own juice or milk (and clean up their own mess, if necessary)



Cooking

- ✓ Create a recipe with your children using words and pictures
- ✓ Read through the recipe together
- ✓ Ask children to help out. They can:
 - wipe the counter
 - crack an egg into a bowl
 - pour batter into muffin tins
 - tear lettuce leaves for a salad
 - set the table



Grocery shopping

- ✓ Ask children to help out. They can:
 - help to write and read the grocery list
 - put bottle and can returns in machines
 - hold the shopping list and help look for specific items
 - get items from the shelf to put into the cart
 - push the cart down the aisle
 - take groceries out to put on the scanner

Laundry

- ✓ Ask children to match objects like socks
- ✓ Ask children to help out. They can collect dirty towels and bedding, put clothes and detergent into the washer, and move clothes from the washer to the dryer
- ✓ Insert money into machines



On the bus, subway, or in the car

- ✓ Figure out how many people can fit on the bus, subway or in a car
- ✓ Guess how many people will get on or off at the next stop
- ✓ Figure out why people put money in the meter
- ✓ Figure out how the doors open and close
- ✓ Look out the window and talk about what you see



Walking down the street

- ✓ Talk about what you see and help children make connections to home and their own life experiences
- ✓ Read road signs, license plates, street signs, house numbers, and the makes of cars
- ✓ Play *I Spy*



A child-approved activity

All About Me Books jumpstart



Make a book from scratch, with you as the main character!

Materials:

Read through this list with your child before starting!



plain white paper



colored construction paper (9x12)



markers or crayons



stapler or hole puncher



yarn



photographs and glue (if desired)

Beginning

Tell children that they will be able to make a book. Give them a blank book with a few pieces of white paper folded inside a piece of construction paper.

Middle

Invite the children to fill the book with a story told in words and pictures. If needed, offer to record the words they say.

End

Children can add photographs with glue. Bind the books with staples along the fold, or punch holes and tie with yarn.

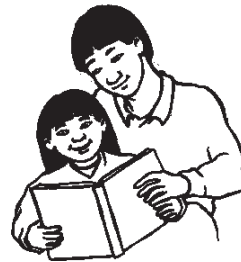
Connecting to School Success

This activity helps prepare your children for school by building the important skill of... *knowing how books work.*

Through active experiences, like creating books, children learn reading skills and the fundamentals of how books work.

Children should understand that:

- books move from front to back
- words explain the pictures in a book
- text moves from left to right across the page
- books have a title and an author



A Related Book
We Are All Alike,
We Are All Different
by Cheltenham Elementary
School Kindergarten

Bringing it Home

Encourage your children to express their ideas.

To help your children decide what to write, ask questions such as,

“Who is in our family?
Who are your friends?
What do you like to do at school?”

If your children are not comfortable writing, they can dictate a story while you write it.



A child-approved activity

Bean Bag Toss



See how many times you can hit the target!

Materials:

Read through this list with your child before starting!



3-6 bean bags or other small, soft objects to throw (If you don't have bean bags, you can use small, soft balls, or put some flour and corn meal inside a sealed plastic bag.)



a large cardboard box



masking tape



scissors

Beginning

Cut different-shaped holes out of the cardboard box to make a target. Put tape on the ground 6-12 feet away from the target.

Middle

The goal is to throw the bean bags through the holes in the box. Ask children what they think the rules should be and write them down.

End

Following the rules you and your children wrote, try to throw the bean bags into the holes on the target.

Connecting to School Success

This activity helps prepare your children for school by building the important skill of... *participating in routines.*

Following rules and taking turns are important social skills needed in schools.

In this activity, children:

- follow a procedure, such as standing on a line and throwing bean bags at a target
- take turns, if they play this game with you or other children



A Related Book
Here Are My Hands
by Bill Martin, Jr. and
John Archambault

Bringing it Home

Reinforce learning by asking questions.

When making the target, ask,
“What shape should we make the holes?
How big should I cut them?”

This encourages children to describe and carry out complex activities.

During the game, you can ask,
“How many of these bean bags do you think will make it in?”

This encourages children to think analytically and predict results.



A child-approved activity

Body Tracings



Make a full-size picture of yourself!

Materials:

Read through this list with your child before starting!



large white paper, cut to be a little bigger than a child (*can also use colored paper*)



markers and crayons



glue



yarn, buttons, fabric scraps

Beginning

Ask children if they know what tracing means.

Invite them to lie down on the paper. Explain to them that they will make a picture of themselves after being traced.

Middle

Once the children have been traced, give them materials to decorate their picture. Listen to what they say about what they are doing.

End

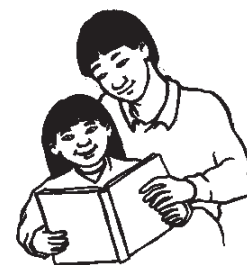
Acknowledge the details of the project. "I see you put blue yarn on your arm." Ask children to write their names on the tracings.

Connecting to School Success

This activity helps prepare your children for school by building the important skill of... *speaking*.

Encourage your children to express themselves verbally by using open-ended questions (questions that can't be answered with a "yes" or "no"). For example, ask your children to describe the activity: "How did you decorate your tracing?"

Expand on what they say with follow-up questions.



A Related Book
Bright Eyes, Brown Skin
by Cheryl Willie Halson

Bringing it Home

Talk children through a complex process.

Many parts of your body make up the whole. Talk with children every step of the way about what you're doing.

"I'm tracing your arm, going up over your shoulder and around your head."

Support how children choose to decorate it, and help them connect their picture to themselves.

"You drew a red shirt just like the red shirt you're wearing today."



A child-approved activity

Make a Match



Make matching cards and play a game!

Materials:

Read through this list with your child before starting!



plain index cards (at least 8)



markers or crayons



construction paper, or cut-outs of shapes, animals, toys, etc.



scissors



tape or glue

Beginning

With children, make pairs of matching cards by drawing or gluing shapes and objects, like two cards with smiley faces.

Middle

Mix up the cards and lay them out in rows, face up. The object of the game is to find all of the matching pairs.

End

For a harder game, lay the cards face down and turn them over two at a time, trying to remember where the match is!

Connecting to School Success

This activity helps prepare your children for school by building the important skill of... *relating to children and adults.*

Children love to play games and love the attention they receive, especially when the adult is engaging and cooperating with the child.

Children:

- develop social skills such as taking turns and following rules
- get help from adults when they need it, without the adult “taking over” the activity



A Related Book
Are You My Mother?
by P. D. Eastman

Bringing it Home

Help children understand the matching.

Young children learn to make matches as they begin to recognize differences in shape and position. In *Are You My Mother?*, you may have to help a child see that the baby bird is looking for a match: the mother bird.

You can help by verbalizing the process:

“Hmm, your card has a red circle on it. That means we need to find another card that has a red circle. Well, this card has a red diamond, that's close, but not quite right . . .”



A child-approved activity

Bubbles



Create, explore, and discover their magic!

jumpstart

Materials:

Read through this list with your child before starting!



clear dish detergent



water



glycerin



plastic bubble wands



drinking straws



string



large bin/bucket

Beginning

Mix 1 cup of dish detergent with 1 gallon of water in a bucket. Add 1/4 cup of glycerin to help bubbles last longer.

Middle

You can make bubble wands by threading string through plastic straws and connecting them into a triangle, square, or larger shape.

End

Invite children to explore the bubbles. "What kind of bubbles do you think we can make?"

Connecting to School Success

This activity helps prepare your children for school by building the important skill of... *speaking*.

Having conversations during play lets children show adults what they are thinking. Encourage them to talk about how their actions affect the bubble's movements and characteristics.

Children learn by:

- building a vocabulary of descriptive words: big, bigger, shiny, float, delicate
- having their actions described in words: "You just made four bubbles!" or "Look at that bubble floating down to the ground!"



A Related Book
Magic Bubble Trip
by Ingrid & Dieter Schubert

Bringing it Home

Encourage children's curiosity and wonder.

Creating bubbles is a great opportunity for children to be creative and scientific. Ask the child to predict what will happen:

"Do you think we can make one large bubble?" or "How far do you think this bubble will float?"

Encourage children to try to understand the process:

"Why do bubbles pop?"



A child-approved activity

Green Light/Red Light jumpstart



A fun game to play together!

Materials:

Read through this list with your child before starting!



good dancing music, appropriate for young children



something to play the music on



one red piece of paper with "Stop" written on it



one green piece of paper with "Go" written on it

Beginning

Hold up the red paper and say, "Red means STOP!" Next say, "What do you think the green paper means? Green means GO." Read the words: "GO" and "STOP!"

Middle

Play the music and let children dance or move for about one minute. Stop the music suddenly and hold up a card.

End

"Green means GO - keep dancing." "Red means STOP - don't move or freeze." You can try to make your children laugh or move using funny faces and/or gestures.

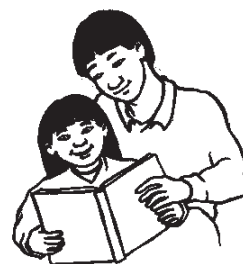
Connecting to School Success

This activity helps prepare your children for school by building the important skill of... *relating to children and adults.*

This game gives children a chance to play with others and to follow rules.

Children:

- watch for the Red/Stop or Green/Go sign to know what to do
- play a fun game with friends
- get the chance to be a leader



A Related Book
Don't Fidget a Feather
by Erica Silverman

Bringing it Home

Make adjustments for children's abilities.

Very young children may not be able to follow the directions of this game. You can play alongside them to show them how it works, but don't worry if they don't play exactly by the rules.

Some children have a hard time playing active games like this without getting too rough. Be prepared to slow the game down or stop completely if children are not being safe.



A child-approved activity

Exploring Fruits

jumpstart 



Play with your food!

Materials:

Read through this list with your child before starting!



washed fruit:
apples, bananas,
kiwi, etc.



bowls
(one per child)



plastic knives



paper towels

Beginning

Roll an apple over the table to each child. Give each child a bowl and plastic knife. Wait to hear their comments.

Middle

Let children explore the apple and note what they do. "I see that you took all of the seeds out." Invite them to taste the apple.

End

Give the children other fruits. Ask them to describe fruits individually and to compare them to each other.

Connecting to School Success

This activity helps prepare your children for school by building the important skill of...

problem solving.

Cutting fruit can be a difficult task. Children need to know how to approach problems and come up with solutions. Don't worry if this becomes a messy activity.

Children learn by:

- practicing fine motor skills: cutting and handling fruit
- learning shapes and colors
- exploring the inside of fruit and comparing different textures



A Related Book
We Love Fruit/Nos Gusta la Fruta
by Allan Fowler

Bringing it Home

Reinforce learning by asking questions.

Having a conversation with your children about the activity builds language skills. You can ask,

"How does the fruit smell?
How does it feel?"

Connect this activity to literacy by asking what letter or sound a fruit begins with.



A child-approved activity

Magic Drawings

jumpstart



Watch your picture magically appear!

Materials:

Read through this list with your child before starting!



white or yellow paper



white or yellow crayons (use same color as paper!)



purple or black paint, thinned down with water, in a small container or paper cup



paint brush

Beginning

Tell children they might be able to make magic: "I wonder what will happen if you color with crayons and then add paint?"

Middle

Give children crayons and paper. It should be hard to see the crayon on the same-colored paper.

End

Paint over the entire drawing with long, broad strokes (the crayon should appear). "I see something happening. What's going on?"

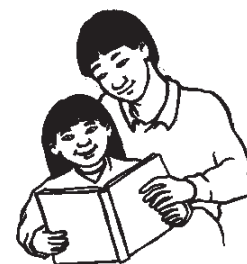
Connecting to School Success

This activity helps prepare your children for school by building the important skill of... *problem solving*.

This activity encourages children to wonder about the effect of paint on crayon. What properties of crayon allow paint to resist it?

Children learn by:

- talking about what they think happened and why
- having their creative ideas encouraged and appreciated, rather than being given the "right" answer
- exploring other materials (such as using markers, pencils, or colored paper) to see if the effect changes



A Related Book
Harold and the Purple Crayon
by Crockett Johnson

Bringing it Home

Make books come alive.

In *Harold and the Purple Crayon*, a little boy takes a journey by creating magic purple drawings. The book comes alive through this activity as children see that they drew a magic drawing, just like Harold.

When reading this book, allow children to talk about what they like about Harold's drawings, what their own favorite color is, and any other ideas that spark their interest.



A child-approved activity

Family Pictures

jumpstart



Create and frame your family photo!

Materials:

Read through this list with your child before starting!



white paper



markers or crayons, in skin tones if possible



family photos to look at (if possible)



construction paper (9x12)



glue or tape

Beginning

Tell children you are making family pictures. Ask them to draw their family however they would like and to describe their drawing.

Middle

Ask the children to label each person or pet and to write something about them. They might dictate something to you.

End

Ask children if they would like to “frame” the picture by gluing or taping it onto the center of a piece of construction paper.

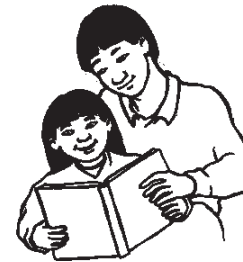
Connecting to School Success

This activity helps prepare your children for school by building the important skill of... *understanding speech.*

Children can present a topic that they care about.

Children learn by:

- responding to questions from an adult about **WHAT** they are drawing and **WHY**
- explaining who the people in the picture are and what their relationship to them is



A Related Book
Peter's Chair
by Ezra Jack Keats

Bringing it Home

Encourage children's beginning writing.

Children may be able to write their own name, “Mom” or “Dad,” and even siblings' names. If they have trouble, help them sound it out. Don't worry if they use inventive spelling to represent the sounds they hear.

Younger children can dictate words for you to write. You can demonstrate how you sound out the words as you write them.



A child-approved activity

Learn to Drive



Turn a cardboard box into your own car!

Materials:

Read through this list with your child before starting!



medium-sized cardboard box with the top and bottom flaps cut off



white paper



tape, glue, or staples



elastic, rope, or thick ribbon



construction paper



markers and crayons

Beginning

Suggest that you turn a cardboard box into a car using the materials. Follow the children's ideas and ask them about their plans to make the car.

Middle

Children may want to decorate the box or to make straps by attaching elastic, rope, or thick ribbon.

End

Invite children to step into the car. Make sure your legs are free and there is enough room to "drive" the car. Ask where they would like to go and go for a drive!

Connecting to School Success

This activity helps prepare your children for school by building the important skill of... *speaking*.

When children talk while they play, they experiment with the possibilities of language. Playing with the homemade car lets children act out situations, ideas, and stories through talking.

Children learn by:

- hearing and using vocabulary such as drive, road, forward, slow, fast, car, van, and bus
- taking on roles (taxi driver, police officer)
- having conversations about what they are doing and why



A Related Book
School Bus
by Donald Crews

Bringing it Home

Collaborate and talk together.

Making the car is a complicated process. Talk with children about how you are working together:

"I really like those car doors you drew. What if I add some windows?"

Discussing the project may lead to other conversations about cars, school buses, taking trips, or any topic that interests you and your children.



A child-approved activity

Having Fun with Nursery Rhymes **jumpstart**



Share Hickory Dickory Dock (or choose a family favorite)!

Materials:

Read through this list with your child before starting!



paper



markers or crayons



a rhyme chart that you can create by writing the words of the nursery rhyme on a piece of paper/ cardboard

*Hickory, dickory, dock
The mouse ran up the clock
The clock struck one,
The mouse did run,
Hickory, dickory, dock*

Beginning

Put up a rhyme chart so that the children can see it. Tell the children that you are going to have some fun by sharing nursery rhymes together. Ask them if they know what rhyming means, and explain that rhyming words sound the same.

Middle

Say the nursery rhyme and explain which words rhyme. Ask the child to say the rhyme with you. This time pat the beat of the words on your knees. When you say the rhyming words - dock/clock, run/one - say them in a louder voice.

End

After saying the rhyme a couple of times, stop at a rhyming word and see if the child can say it.

Connecting to School Success

This activity helps prepare your children for school by building the important skill of... *understanding sounds in words and recognizing and making rhymes.*

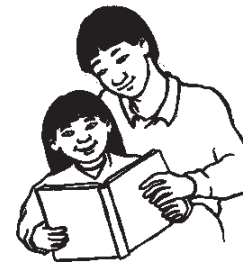
Children have fun with words through rhymes and strengthen their skill of rhyme recognition. This activity helps children connect sounds in words and the rhythm of reading. Patting the beat on your knee helps children become aware of the rhythm and sound of words.

Bringing it Home

Help children become aware of sounds in words.

Preschool-aged children begin to learn about certain sounds in words and are especially interested in rhyming words. Children enjoy playing with words that end with the same sounds, like sat and pat, and words that begin with the same sounds, like big, ball, and bat.

Sharing childhood rhymes can be a wonderful activity for all family members and can help children learn who different family members are. Think back to some of your favorite nursery rhymes and share them!



A Related Book
A Child's Treasury of Nursery Rhymes
by Kady MacDonald Denton



A child-approved activity

Writing Notes and Messages jumpstart



Write notes to a special friend!

Materials:

Read through this list with your child before starting!



a variety of small notepads (cut up paper and staple together)



a collection of colored pens, pencils



scissors



staplers



loose sheets of paper (to create their own note pads if they like)

Beginning

Ask children if they have ever seen an adult writing a note or a message. Tell them that they can use notepads, sticky notes, pens, and pencils to write their own notes. Suggest that they write a note to a favorite cousin, aunt, or other family member.

Middle

As the children begin to write, imitate what they are writing/drawing. Listen to what children say about what they are doing. You can offer to write the children's words. Read back the "message" and point to the words the children dictated.

End

Suggest that the children send the note to the person they wrote. Invite them to write notes whenever they need. Decide together on a place to keep the note pads, pens, and pencils.

Connecting to School Success

This activity helps prepare your children for school by building the important skill of... *beginning writing.*

A child who is beginning to write will be able to copy or write letters, their own name, or even some words.

They may also begin with drawings and scribble writing.



A Related Book
Chrysanthemum
by Kevin Henkes

Bringing it Home

Celebrate each child's uniqueness and encourage children's beginning writing.

Young children love to do the things that "big" people are doing. Writing notes on "grown-up" special paper or pads is a great way to get children involved in writing.

As children see other writing, they want to write, too. The more chances they have to "practice" writing in their very own way, the more interested they will become and the more they will be able to write.



A child-approved activity

Oobleck

jumpstart



Enjoy the silly, squishy feeling of Oobleck between your fingers!

Materials:

Read through this list with your child before starting!



cornstarch



water



food coloring (if desired)



a large bowl, or individual small bowls/pie tins for each child

Beginning

Mix equal parts cornstarch and water (start with 1 cup of each). If desired, add food coloring.

Middle

The Oobleck should feel not quite solid: you can pick up a handful, but it oozes back between your fingers when you let go.

End

Play with the Oobleck with your hands for as long as you want! Ask children to describe how it feels. Write down what they say.

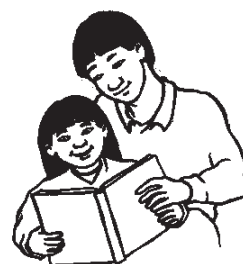
Connecting to School Success

This activity helps prepare your children for school by building the important skill of... *speaking*.

Children's language skills develop the more they communicate their ideas. What could be more interesting than talking about something oozing between your fingers? This activity gives children something to talk about.

Children learn by:

- being asked to describe what they are doing and feeling
- hearing and using new descriptive words, like “soft,” “slimy,” and “oozing”



A Related Book
Bartholomew and the Oobleck
by Dr. Seuss

Bringing it Home

Problem solve with your children.

Oobleck is a unique substance. Is it a liquid or a solid? Help your children understand these concepts through discussion:

“Oobleck is a solid because we can pick it up. Oobleck is a liquid because it takes the shape of the container and runs through our fingers. What do you notice about Oobleck?”

You might want to test other items in your home to see if they are solids or liquids.



A child-approved activity

Planting Grass Seed



Plant seeds and watch them grow!

Materials:

Read through this list with your child before starting!



plastic cups



soil



grass seed



spoons



water



markers



paper



newspaper

Beginning

Tell children you are going to plant some grass, and ask what they think you will need. Record what they say with words and/or pictures.

Middle

Give each child a cup, soil, and a spoon to explore as they wish. Offer them some seeds and ask if the seed will need anything to grow.

End

Put the grass in a sunny place where children can see it. Ask children to help water the grass and check its growth on a daily basis.

Connecting to School Success

This activity helps prepare your children for school by building the important skill of... *planning complex activities.*

Activities such as this one give children many opportunities to ask questions and problem solve. As children are encouraged to share their knowledge and gain information, they develop habits that will promote later school success.

Children learn by:

- receiving appropriate answers to their questions
- having adults set an example by asking questions of them
- being asked to predict “what will happen” (in this case, when grass seed is put in soil and watered)



A Related Book
How a Seed Grows
by Helen J. Jordan

Bringing it Home

Use books as resources.

It is important for children to see books as exciting and useful. *How a Seed Grows* can help you and your child learn more about how grass grows.

Emphasize the role of books:

“When I want to know more about something, I find a book that has lots of information. Should we look at this book to find out more about how those seeds and soil will turn into grass?”



A child-approved activity

Playdough



Measure, mix, and enjoy your own playdough!

Materials:

Read through this list with your child before starting!



flour



salt



water



food coloring



a bowl or pie tin



playdough toys: cookie cutters, plastic utensils, dowels, etc.

Beginning

Write the recipe on a card or piece of paper: 2 cups of flour, 1 cup of salt, and 1 cup of water.

Middle

Measure the ingredients in a bowl or pie tin and let children mix. Let children add food coloring and mix to the desired color.

End

Once the playdough is made, you can use the playdough toys to cut, shape, pound, roll, and squish it.

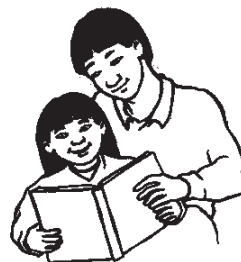
Connecting to School Success

This activity helps prepare your children for school by building the important skill of... *beginning reading.*

Before children learn to read, they need to understand the use of print in their everyday life. Children can learn to recognize the playdough recipe's words and numbers.

Children learn by:

- using written information to create something that can be immediately touched and felt
- having an adult point out each line of the recipe as they do it
- seeing how the word "flour" on the recipe matches the word "flour" on the container



Bringing it Home

Talk children through a complex process.

Since making playdough is a multi-step process, talk with children every step of the way about **WHAT** you're doing and **WHY**:

"Now we'll add the salt. First measure 1 cup."

Talk about how the process relates to the final product:

"Now that we've finished **MAKING** the play dough, what do you want to **DO** with it?"



A Related Book
Pancakes, Pancakes
by Eric Carle



A child-approved activity

Playdough Exploration jumpstart



Explore a fresh batch of playdough!

Materials:

Read through this list with your child before starting!



playdough
(homemade or store-bought)



small cylindrical blocks or rolling pins



a variety of utensils (knives, forks, garlic press, etc.)



craft sticks, straws (optional)

Beginning

Tell children you have some new playdough for them. Give each child a blob and the chance to play with it for a while.

Middle

Give children the utensils. As the children squeeze, pound, and press, ask them to describe what they are doing.

End

If necessary, add craft sticks or straws. Engage children in conversation while playing and involve them in clean-up.

Connecting to School Success

This activity helps prepare your children for school by building the important skill of... *planning complex activities.*

Children learn through play, so the more complex their play - the more details and steps they use - the more they learn.

Children learn to think creatively by having the freedom to explore stimulating materials like playdough.

Bringing it Home

Help children plan a complex process.

Since playdough offers so many options for play, ask children to plan what they will do with it.

“What would you like to make with playdough today?”

Review the steps that the children take.

“I see that you flattened the playdough, then rolled it and cut it into pieces.”

Reinforcing this planning process and expanding on your children's play will eventually help your children plan more complex activities.



A Related Book
Pancakes, Pancakes
by Eric Carle

Post Office

A child-approved
activity

Explore writing as you make and mail postcards!

Materials:

Read through this list with your child before starting!



blank index cards



markers



sample postcards that have a picture on one side and writing on the other (“real” mailed ones are best!)



a post office in your neighborhood

Beginning

Look at some sample postcards. Notice that they have a picture on one side and writing on the other. Draw a picture on one side of the index card.

Middle

Turn the card over and write a note to someone special on the left side. On the right side, write the name and address of that person.

End

Add a stamp in the upper right corner. Take a trip to the Post Office (a pretend one, if necessary) to mail the postcard!

Connecting to School Success

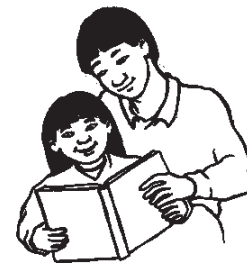
This activity helps prepare your children for school by building the important skill of...

beginning writing.

This activity - in which children make something “real” (whether the postcard is actually sent or not) - demonstrates that writing has a purpose. Following up with a trip to the post office will further emphasize the real-world applications of writing.

Children learn by:

- making projects that use writing for “real” purposes
- predicting what might happen when the postcard is sent and received



A Related Book
The Jolly Postman
by Janet & Allen Ahlberg

Bringing it Home

Connect this activity to a book.

One way to reinforce your children's love of learning is to make it fun. *The Jolly Postman* is about a postal delivery man and all of the letters he brings to people.

This book is easy to read aloud with its rhyming text and use of storybook characters. Read the story first, and then create postcards to send to family and friends.



A child-approved activity

Storytelling Puppets

jumpstart 



Create characters for your own puppet show!

Materials:

Read through this list with your child before starting!



lunch size paper bags



markers or crayons



glue



yarn or string



novelties such as scraps of fabric/felt, cotton balls, buttons, etc.



large box or low table for a Puppet Theater



a cozy spot to sit and tell a story with their puppet

Beginning

Explain that children can make a puppet using a paper bag. Ask, “how should we make it?”

Middle

Give the children markers, crayons, yarn, buttons, and other materials to decorate the paper. Watch them create the puppet and use words to describe what you see them doing.

End

Use your puppets to act out or tell a story. You can choose a story from a book or make one up!

Connecting to School Success

This activity helps prepare your children for school by building the important skill of... *understanding and expressing feelings.*

Puppets are a useful way to encourage children to talk about their feelings. Many children feel more comfortable using a puppet to express their point of view, and shy children will sometimes let a puppet talk for them.

Children learn by:

- hearing new vocabulary, such as happy, proud, sad, and frustrated
- seeing an adult's example of how to express feelings in words: “That made me really angry! What should I do?”



A Related Book
The Three Bears, Little Red Riding Hood, or other traditional fairy tales

Bringing it Home

Talk while you play.

Puppets are the perfect way to engage children in play that includes lots of talking. Demonstrate to the child how to make the puppets “talk.” Be creative and use different or silly voices for characters.

This kind of play is also a way to see how much children understand. For example, if your children are acting out *The Three Bears*, which parts of the story do they re-enact? Which parts are omitted?



A child-approved activity

Quilt Making

jumpstart 



Make artistic squares and fit them together!

Materials:

Read through this list with your child before starting!



paper or felt squares (about 6"x6")



scraps - paper, shiny paper, fabric, odds and ends



markers



glue



backdrop for the quilt, such as a large sheet



pencil

Beginning

Use a pencil to mark the quilt backdrop into squares. They should be the same size as the paper/felt squares you are using for quilt pieces.

Middle

Give the children the felt or paper squares to decorate with all available materials. Ask children to mark their square with their name.

End

As each square is completed, ask each child where it should go. Place it on the penciled grid and glue down.

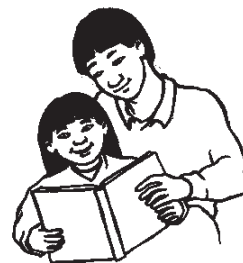
Connecting to School Success

This activity helps prepare your children for school by building the important skill of... *relating to children and adults.*

Children must collaborate with an adult to accomplish a complex activity. The quilt becomes a concrete example of collaborative work in which all the pieces fit together to create a whole.

Children learn by:

- being encouraged to talk, ask questions and converse
- following the examples and actions of adults
- exploring diverse materials and ideas



A Related Book
The Quilt
by Ann Jonas

Bringing it Home

Talk while you play and build language skills through conversation.

Children develop speech through lots of practice. Even though this is an art activity, keep up the conversation by asking different kinds of questions and talking.

While the children are working, you can ask questions such as,

“How did you think to draw that?”



A child-approved activity

Strike up the Band

jumpstart 



Make your own instruments to play at home!

Materials:

Read through this list with your child before starting!



empty containers with lids (margarine tubs, coffee cans) or clean soda bottles with caps



small items: pebbles, dry rice, birdseed



construction paper (cut to fit containers)



glue or tape



markers

Beginning

Tell children that they are going to make instruments. Ask them to choose a container and something to fill it with.

Middle

When the children are done, cover their container and invite them to decorate their instrument.

End

Let children play their instrument. Ask them to describe their instrument's sound or sing a song. Imitate the sounds they make.

Connecting to School Success

This activity helps prepare your children for school by building the important skill of... *speaking*.

Young children need many opportunities to speak and to explore the possibilities of language. By singing or chanting along with music, children use spoken language in creative and fun ways.

Children learn by:

- singing favorite songs as they play their instruments
- making up words to go along with the music
- chanting along with *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*



A Related Book
Chicka Chicka Boom Boom
by Bill Martin, Jr.

Bringing it Home

Connect this activity to a book.

Chicka Chicka Boom Boom is loved by many children for its great rhythm and colorful pictures. Read the book with your child, and shake your new instruments along with the chorus:

Skit Skat Skoodle Doot
Flip Flop Flee
Everybody runs to the
Coconut tree . . .



A child-approved activity

Going on a Listening Walk jumpstart



A fun way to build listening skills!

Materials:

Read through this list with your child before starting!

(This walk can occur inside or outside.)



tape recorder
(if possible)



paper, note pads/pencils to jot down what children hear on the walk



construction paper, markers, stapler



backup materials: large sheet of paper and markers to create a chart of all the sounds heard on the walk

Beginning

Decide ahead of time where you are going for the listening walk. Try to go to noisy places like the playground and to quiet places in and around your home. Ask your children to listen carefully for any sounds they might hear. Write down what they hear or, if possible, tape record the sounds.

Middle

After returning home, encourage children to share what they heard. Ask if they would like to draw a picture about their walk. If possible, share the tape recorded sounds. Write down what they tell you or encourage them to write their own words.

End

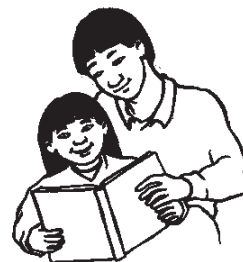
Ask the children if they would like to create a Listening Walk Book. Staple their pictures together and ask them to copy or write the letters for the title of the book on the cover along with their name as author.

Connecting to School Success

This activity helps prepare your children for school by building the important skill of...
understanding sounds in words.

A listening walk gives children the chance to spend fun time with an adult they enjoy. As they listen carefully to the sounds around them, they build skills that help them learn how to listen for sounds in words.

This activity also helps children learn how books work.



Bringing it Home

Talk and listen together.

Going on the listening walk and creating a book lets children and adults work closely together.

Build this feeling of partnership by talking with children about the work and about any other topics that come up.



A Related Book
Go Away,
Big Green Monster
by Ed Emberley

Additional Resources for Parents

If you have access to a computer, there are many Web sites that provide free articles, activity guides, calendars, government policy information, answers to frequently asked questions, and much more. If you do not have access to a computer, you may call and request information to be sent to you. Below is a list of resources with Web site and telephone information (when available).

To learn more about your local Head Start program and how to become involved with your local **Parent Committee**, visit www.headstartinfo.org or call **1.866.763.6481**.

Family Education Network

www.familyeducation.com 617.542.6500

The Family Education Network is a leading source of educational content, resources, and shopping for parents, teachers, and kids. Resources include homework help, parenting tips, and expert advice.

National Association for the Education of Young Children

www.naeyc.org/families

NAEYC is the nation's largest and most influential organization of early childhood educators and others dedicated to improving the quality of programs for children from birth through third grade. It provides resources and information for parents as guidance for choosing the best possible care and education for their children.

National Institute for Literacy

www.nifl.gov 202.223.2025

The National Institute for Literacy, a federal agency, provides leadership on literacy issues, including the improvement of reading instruction for children, youth, and adults. In consultation with the U.S. Departments of Education, Labor, and Health and Human Services, the Institute serves as a national resource on current, comprehensive literacy research, practice, and policy.

PBS Kids

www.pbskids.org/readytolearn

Ready to Learn is PBS's nationwide effort to ensure all America's children are prepared for school success. The service provides on-air, online, and print resources and local support.

Reading is Fundamental

www.rif.org 1.877.RIFREAD

Reading is Fundamental is the nation's largest non-profit children's literacy organization. It provides advice, materials, and resources for parents including an online book database for parents and children to search for books by title, author, category, age level, or keyword.

U.S. Department of Education

www.ed.gov 1.800.U.S.A.LEARN

The U.S. Department of Education provides families with information on various topics including research and statistics, services and funding, resource guides and publications, and information on the No Child Left Behind Law.

Tips for Using Your Local Library

1. There are an estimated 117,590 libraries of all kinds in the United States today. Chances are there is one within easy access of your home. If you are not sure where the closest branch is, check in your local phone book under Libraries.
2. Get a library card: Library cards are generally free to those living in the library's service area. In most cases, borrowing privileges are granted on the spot. Some libraries may require some form of identification from an adult.
3. Librarians are glad to help you and your family. Librarians are experts at answering questions and helping kids connect with books to appeal to their special interests. Be sure to meet the librarian and encourage children to ask for help.
4. Many school and public libraries make computers available for public use. Feel free to ask for assistance. Help your child explore new technology. It's probably new to you too.
5. Libraries offer books, magazines, computers, software, and other multimedia materials for your use. You can also borrow books, stories, and songs on tape to play in the car, while brushing teeth, before nap or bedtime. Check out videos.
6. Libraries often have a variety of programs to stimulate an interest in reading and learning. Preschool story hours expose young children to the joy of reading, while homework centers provide computers for older children after school. Ask about your library.
7. Be a role model. Let your child see you reading at home or at the library. Make reading fun. When something is fun, children love to do it. Set aside a special read aloud time for the whole family. Show them you're getting books from the library too.
8. As their reading skills improve, have your children read to you.
9. Keep a list of questions your child asks you. Take it with you to the library. Let your child check out what interests them, not just what you think they should read. Make a special place for their books at home, where they can be easily reached.
10. Remind them when it's time to return the books. It's also a great way to teach sharing.

Source: <http://pbskids.org/lions/tips/local-library.html>
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Jumpstart is working toward the day every child in America enters school prepared to succeed.

Jumpstart recognizes that the first and most important teacher in a child's life is his or her family. The *Jumpstart Family Resource Book* is just one of the ways that Jumpstart reaches out to children and families and helps bring together learning and fun!

The *Family Resource Book* was written and developed by Jumpstart.

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617.542.5867

www.jstart.org